



REVIEWS

BOOKS

Reviewed by Ruth Parnell

THE SECRET TEACHINGS OF PLANTS

by Stephen Harrod Buhner

Bear & Co., USA, 2004

ISBN 1-59143-035-6 (318pp tpb)

Availability: **Australia**—Brumby Books, tel (03) 9761 5535; **USA**—Inner Traditions, <http://www.innertraditions.com>

In this insightful study of the natural world, herbalist and poet Stephen Buhner argues that science will not progress if it continues to rely on analytical, linear, reductionist, deterministic and materialistic modes of cognition. The way forward is through an holistic, intuitive, "depth" mode that is more in line with how indigenous peoples gain knowledge of the world around them. His intention is to open us up to the idea that the heart is an organ of perception and intelligence, a brain that feels, that operates in physical, mental, emotional and spiritual planes. Native peoples and sensitive individuals through the ages have been able to learn directly from plants—that is, they learned the uses of plants as medicines from the plants themselves, not through mere trial and error—and to do so they had to use heart-centred perception.

For the sake of explanation Buhner takes an analytical approach in the first half ("Systole") of *The Secret Teachings of Plants*, but he discusses information that's at the cutting edge of science, dealing with the nonlinearity of nature, self-organisation of life and bioenergetics as well as specifics of the heart as a multidimensional organ.

The second half ("Dystole") takes us on an inward journey into nature and the nature of

ourselves, and includes snippets of wisdom from remarkable people who have learned from direct heart perception—Goethe, for instance, who studied plant metamorphosis.

Buhner suggests that biognosis, this "knowledge of life", is an inherent aspect of our humanness and something we all have the capacity to develop; so he provides exercises to help us become more attuned and better able to "gather knowledge from the heart of the world" about everything from our physical selves to the environment at large. In reality, this heart intelligence is a way of being and it allows an intimate sense of connectedness with nature.

Experiment with Buhner's advice and you're bound to feel and be more alive!

THE CALCIUM BOMB

by Douglas Mulhall and Katja Hansen

The Writers' Collective, Rhode Island, USA, 2005

ISBN 1-59411-101-4 (228pp hc)

Availability: The Writers' Collective, tel 800 497 0037 (toll free in North America); Amazon.com

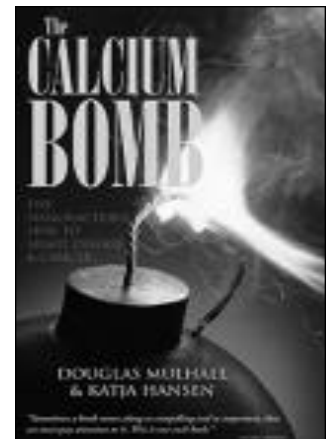
One thing that's common to Alzheimer's disease, arthritis, cancer, heart disease, psoriasis and a host of other illnesses is calcification: the build-up of calcium phosphate deposits in the blood, blood vessels or organs. Until fairly recently, these deposits have been noticed but ignored as having a role to play in the disease process itself.

So what's behind this calcification? According to authors Douglas Mulhall and Katja Hansen, writing in *The Calcium Bomb*, the invaders at the heart of these deposits are "nanobacteria"—although they're so microscopic that even the frontier scientists aren't sure whether they're bacteria

or not, so we may as well call them "nanobes". Signs of calcium build-up in the body can be a signal of impending disease including tumour development, but if they're so bound up in the disease precondition, what would happen if we could dissolve them? Or should we be tackling the nanobes that are at the heart of these calcium phosphate deposits?

Breakthrough clinical studies are going on around the world, utilising combinations comprising the chelator EDTA, the antibiotic tetracycline and a cocktail of "nutraceuticals". The authors argue that if success is being had in reversing the symptoms of the most intransigent diseases of our times, then doctors should be much better informed by health authorities about their benefits and these treatments should be widely available. It's not so long ago that the bacterial source of stomach ulcers was discovered.

There's much to be learnt about prevention, too, in this "explosive" book. (Also see Mulhall's article in this issue.)



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BIG OIL AND THEIR BANKERS IN THE PERSIAN GULF

by Dean Henderson

Dean Henderson (self-pub.), USA, 2005
ISBN 1-57558-000-0 (451pp tpb)
Availability: Dean Henderson, 1706
Diane Street, Papillion, NE 68046, USA,
email lccopperros@yahoo.com

The Illuminati's plan to control the world's resources and implement a globalised economy is well on track, although new financial and military alliances may still be emerging as the elite move their pieces on the grand chessboard. The power behind this centuries-old (if not millennia-old) cabal set on dominating the world is a group of "Eight Families" with the familiar name Rothschild at the top of the pyramid, joined by other key European and American banking families. Certainly many researchers have written at length about their centuries-long power plays, but Dean Henderson assembles a staggering amount of detail in the one place and makes some surprising connections about these power players in *Big Oil and their Bankers...*, while acknowledging the contribution of these researchers throughout his commentary and in his (unnumbered) endnotes (though an index would have been helpful).

Tales of conspiracy and corruption are writ large on every page, so much so that it's hard to single out any particular episode in recent or distant history that is worse than the next. But the theme running through the book is that of the "Eight Families" who have the "Four Horsemen" of oil do their bidding; these are the giant oil/resource companies Exxon-Mobil, Chevron-Exxon, BP-Amoco and Royal Dutch/Shell. Henderson, a political activist, organic farmer and columnist

with an MS in environmental studies, examines their exploits in securing markets and revenues but with reference, too, to their global networks in intelligence and terrorism as well as in arms and narcotics trading.

However, Henderson goes further (perhaps too far for some readers) to include his takes on the origin and spread of Freemasonry, on the so-called "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" and on the Illuminati's connection with the allegedly reptilian Anunnaki "gods" linked with ancient Sumer (and popularised in extreme conspiracy lore by author David Icke). Overall, an extraordinary exposé of the powers and events that are exacting a heavy toll on us, the people.

PYRAMID OF FIRE: The Lost Aztec Codex

by John Major Jenkins & Martin Matz

Bear & Co., USA, 2004
ISBN 1-59143-032-1 (175pp tpb)
Availability: **Australia**—Brumby Books, tel (03) 9761 5535; **USA**—Inner Traditions,
<http://www.innertraditions.com>

The Pyramid of Fire is a "lost" Aztec codex (hieroglyphic manuscript) which was probably painted in the latter half of the 15th century and has been protected by the Mazatec of Mexico ever since. However, in 1961, the American visionary poet Marty Matz, having lived in Mexico off and on since the late 1950s, was initiated into Mazatec secret knowledge by a shaman, don Daniel, who read/performed the codex text to him for transcription in the native Nahuatl. Matz also transcribed the original pictographic form and translated the text into English. Apart from sharing the content with his fellow Beat poets, he guarded the codex translation for many years, and it was

not until 1995 that, on the suggestion of Terence McKenna, he teamed up with Aztec and Mayan scholar John Major Jenkins to bring this material to a wide audience.

One of the fascinating things about the codex—and the translation is included in this book—is how it corresponds with what could be termed "perennial philosophy": a "visionary ascent literature" found in many traditions around the world from the kabbalistic, gnostic and alchemical to the teachings of Gurdjieff. In the final chapter, Jenkins compares the Pyramid of Fire's concepts with those of Taoism and Hinduism. The basic premise is that personal sacrifice is a necessary prerequisite for spiritual growth.



Fascinating background is provided by Matz, with a short story on his search for Paititi—the legendary paradise city that ends the spiritual quest—and an unfinished novella structured upon all 13 pages of the codex (Matz died in 2001). Interestingly, the 13th page of Matz's codex was missing until Jenkins was able to transcribe it from a



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recording Matz made in the early 1960s with Jack Kerouac! There's additional commentary on the codex lines by Jenkins, who is convinced the codex has mantric power and relevance for our times.

THE COST OF A DISCOVERY

by **Loïc Le Ribault**

LLR-G5 Ltd, Ireland, 2003 (first published in French in 1998)

ISBN n/a (488pp tpb)

Availability: LLR-G5 Ltd, c/- Ross Post Office, Castlebar, County Mayo, Republic of Ireland

If you followed Martin J. Walker's story of the persecution of French forensic scientist Loïc Le Ribault in our last two issues, you may be interested to read *The Cost of a Discovery*. This is Le Ribault's memoir of his life in forensics as well as in developing the G5 organic silica compound that has so riled the French authorities and the big pharmaceutical companies. It was first published in French in 1998, but Le Ribault has updated it for his 2003 English-language edition, although it was released before his imprisonment in Switzerland in November 2003 and France in early 2004.

His recollections of his forensic research are intriguing, although this work, too, brought on several battles with the authorities as he was not prepared to toe the line. One interesting aside in his coverage of the grim forensic cases he's been involved with is his analysis of the videotape of the "live" executions of the Ceausescus of Romania.

It's a tragedy of our times that visionary, innovative and dedicated scientists like Le Ribault are so persecuted instead of praised for providing answers for the ills that ail us and our societies. However, his battle with

the French state could have been duplicated in any nation where a maverick who goes against the status quo comes up against the full force of a corrupt police force, a compromised judiciary and powerful corporate interests. And yet Le Ribault's story is a triumph over adversity, for he's back in Ireland producing his famous G5 formula without being persecuted and, with his supporters, is making a difference to people's lives. One person can indeed help change the world, but at what personal cost?

THE BROTHER OF JESUS AND THE LOST TEACHINGS OF CHRISTIANITY

by **Jeffrey J. Bütz**

Inner Traditions, USA, 2005

ISBN 1-59477-043-3 (220pp tpb)

Availability: **Australia**—Brumby Books, tel (03) 9761 5535; **USA**—Inner Traditions, <http://www.innertraditions.com>

Probably the most overlooked and suppressed figure in the early Christian Church was James, younger brother (but not the only one) of Jesus. According to author Jeffrey Bütz (a Lutheran minister, theological scholar and an adjunct professor of world religions at Penn State University), it was James, not Peter, who was the leader of the fledgling Jewish Christian movement from the time of Jesus' crucifixion.

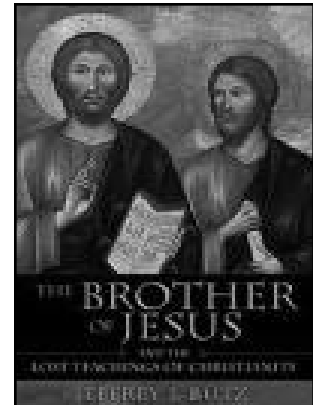
Highlighting some key scholarly investigations into the historical Jesus as well as canonical and apocryphal writings, Bütz maintains that breakthroughs in understanding come by analysing the figures in the context of their essential Jewishness. He agrees that studying the life and works of James (Ya'akov) can give insights into the true teachings and story of Jesus—and how they've been covered up by dogma and doc-

trine. The fact that Jesus had siblings at all is a cause of embarrassment for the Roman Catholic Church, he notes, because it threatens the doctrine of virgin birth and Jesus' mother Mary's perpetual virginity.

It was James who was embroiled in ideological battles with Paul, and Bütz argues that Paul's interpretations, which became the foundation of the Christian Church, were at odds in many ways with the teachings of Jesus. James' desire to retain Jewish law and practices while upholding the ministry of Jesus lost out to Paul's zeal to take the mission to the Gentiles, and the sack of Jerusalem in AD 70 cemented the split.

But the memory and teachings of James have been kept alive as an undercurrent over the last 2,000 years, quite separate from the Roman Church, as Bütz explains.

His hope is that the insights that James provides on his brother Jesus could help heal the rifts between Christianity, Judaism and Islam. His book is another in a growing movement that's changing our perspectives on historical and religious traditions.



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THE TRUE MEANING OF THE DA VINCI CODE

by Robert Pope

The Science-Art Research Centre of Australia, Inc., 2005

ISBN 0-9577784-7-3 (155pp tpb)

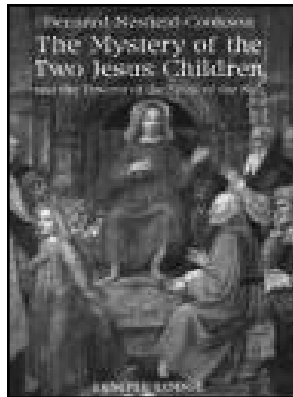
Availability: **Australia**—The Science-Art Research Centre of Australia, Inc., PO Box 773, Murwillumbah, NSW 2484, email pope@science-art.com.au

By adhering to a mechanistic world view, Western civilisation is on a path to extinction, says Science-Art philosopher Robert Pope. The ancient knowledge passed on by the Greeks upheld a survival science, a "Saviour science" that was misinterpreted by Leonardo da Vinci but was privately understood by Isaac Newton.

Da Vinci was an "unbalanced genius" according to Professor Pope, and by "inadvertently" obscuring the "principle of creation" he helped bring into existence a mechanistic mindset that is now accelerating a global crisis of destruction. He made the ultimate mistake by suggesting that all of the universe could be made visible to human perception—and yet the Greeks, and other ancients before them, identified with a universal reality in which harmonious, invisible atomic movement generated divine wisdom.

In response to popular novels like Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, Pope hopes to set the record straight by returning to the atomistic philosophy of the ancient Greek scholars such as Plato and Philo. Plato's world view is much more akin to a holographic reality, Pope argues. The "true meaning of the code", he suggests, relates to atomic movement creating evolutionary wisdom, and he points out some classic examples of Renaissance art that communicate

this truth. Furthermore, he says, the quest of the Knights Templar was bound up in ensuring that the wisdom of this code would not be lost. In this escapade through the philosophies of the ages, Pope reassesses our technocentric society and posits a better way to achieve true democracy and peace.



THE MYSTERY OF THE TWO JESUS CHILDREN and the Descent of the Spirit of the Sun

by Bernard Nesfield-Cookson

Temple Lodge, UK, 2005

ISBN 1-902636-65-1 (82pp tpb)

Availability: Temple Lodge, <http://www.templelodge.com>

There's an underground mystery tradition that holds that there were *two* Jesus children. The two completely distinct genealogies given in the canonical gospels of Matthew and Luke lend support to this notion, says UK author and educator Bernard Nesfield-Cookson.

He contends that the genealogies of Matthew and Luke split after King David;

the Matthew tree goes from Solomon, David's eldest and royal son, while in Luke it goes from Nathan, the prophet-priest who was another of David's sons. There were two Marys and Josephs, he says, as well as two Jesus/Messiah contenders who were a year apart in age, so these stories of the childhood of Jesus are describing the lives of two different people, he maintains. The "two Jesuses" concept is recorded in various apocryphal and gnostic texts, was known in the Arab world, was portrayed in certain paintings of the Renaissance era, and was confirmed in the so-called Dead Sea Scrolls that were found at Qumran in 1947.

In fact, Nesfield-Cookson is a student of Rudolf Steiner, who in 1908–09, decades before the scrolls were found, publicly discussed this dichotomy. However, Steiner's contention was that during the reputed missing three days in the Temple, the wisdom and cognitive abilities of the Solomon Jesus were transferred to the more sensitive, soulful, 12-year-old Nathan Jesus in a magical ceremony that fulfilled the prophecies, but with the result that the former was depleted of his life-force and died. The fact that incidents like this were passed on and recorded in Renaissance art adds weight to the author's argument that there was an esoteric undercurrent so strong that it was kept flowing through the centuries.

Nesfield-Cookson says that Steiner also drew on the wisdom of ancient Persia and India, suggesting that what happened in the Temple between the Solomon and Nathan lines was a fusing of the Zarathustra and Buddha streams of wisdom. He shines a light on the mystery of the "descent of the spirit of the Sun" in this thoughtful reassessment of biblical and spiritual history.



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UFO CRASH IN BRAZIL: A Genuine UFO Crash with Surviving ETs by Dr Roger K. Leir

The Book Tree, San Diego, USA, 2005
ISBN 1-58509-105-7 (150pp tpb)
Availability: The Book Tree, tel 1-800 700 8733 (toll-free in North America), website <http://www.thebooktree.com>

A land of colour and contradiction, Brazil is no stranger to UFO and paranormal activity and has had its fair share of truthful claims and cruel hoaxes surrounding these phenomena. News of one particularly unusual ET-related incident in July 1996 in the city of Varginha, north of São Paulo, captured the headlines and hit the radars of most ufologists around the world.

Dr Roger Leir, who conducts research on UFO phenomena and has a particular focus on the physical evidence for alien implants (his book *The Aliens and The Scalpel* was reviewed in NEXUS 6/03), has been intrigued for years by this case. The famous Varginha incident involved a crashed UFO and a couple of surviving aliens who interacted with the populace for a short time before being hunted, captured and whisked away by the Brazilian military, possibly with covert US military complicity.

In any case, it wasn't until 2002 that Dr Leir managed to travel to Varginha to check out the evidence, or what was left of it, for himself. With help from contacts in the Brazilian UFO research world, he tracked down and interviewed a number of eyewitnesses to the strange incidents—including people who'd not previously met each other but whose stories have uncanny similarities. Statements obtained in interviews from three young girls who encountered one of the aliens, from medical staff on duty at the

medical hospitals, and from military personnel involved in the retrieval support the case for contact. Dr Leir believes that what happened in Varginha is among the most important UFO events ever, especially as it involved direct human interaction with ETs—true close encounters of the first kind. He also draws parallels with the 1947 alleged UFO crash at Roswell, New Mexico.

There are many bizarre moments and amazing scenes in Dr Leir's *UFO Crash in Brazil*, and enough travel highlights to make you think seriously about visiting Brazil—for the land and the people, not the aliens!

WELCOME TO THE DANCE: Caffeine Allergy—A Masked Cerebral Allergy and Progressive Toxic Dementia by Ruth Whalen, MLT

Trafford Publishing, Canada, 2005
ISBN 1-4120-5000-6 (423pp tpb)
Availability: Trafford Publishing,
<http://www.trafford.com>

It was not until 1999, some 27 years after she first showed symptoms, that lab technician Ruth Whalen was diagnosed with severe caffeine allergy/toxicity. Apparently she had developed a sensitivity to caffeine as a child (whose parents drank lots of strong coffee), and although she's now got it out of her system she still has to be careful of going into anaphylactic shock should she even be around coffee bean aroma.

Embarking on a research effort, she discovered that her symptoms were similar to classic signs of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, and yet she had a hard time convincing doctors and psychiatrists that their treatments weren't helping her; they only made her worse and forced her into a psychiatric ward for a while. She also learned

that some drugs prescribed for these mental disorders contain caffeine, and thus can exacerbate an existing caffeine allergy.

Welcome to the Dance is Whalen's harrowing story of struggling with a confusing set of physical and psychiatric symptoms and waking up to and learning to deal with her situation. The foreword is by Dr A. Hoffer, president of the International Schizophrenia Foundation, who says that at least 40 per cent of schizophrenic patients have food allergies—a statement which supports the call for more research to be conducted in these areas, including into allergies to caffeine and its metabolites such as theophylline. And let's not forget: caffeine isn't just found in cups of coffee but in soft drinks, chocolates and even teas. The caffeine anaphylaxis that Whalen underwent was like being chronically drugged on amphetamines, altering perceptions, thoughts and actions.

If you think you may have a caffeine allergy you'd be well advised to investigate the literature on the subject, and Whalen provides extensive listings.



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POWERDOWN: Options and Actions for a Post-Carbon World

by **Richard Heinberg**

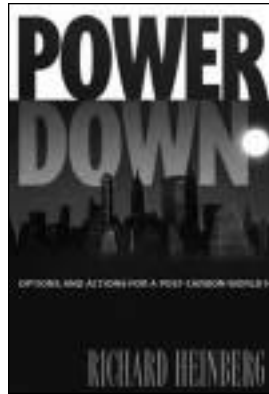
New Society Publishers, Canada, 2004

ISBN 0-86571-510-6 (208pp tpb)

Availability: New Society Publishers,

<http://www.newsociety.com>

Independent "information worker" Richard Heinberg wonders how many more warnings about impending environmental and economic crises do we have to have in order to make changes to stave off the coming energy famine and socio-economic meltdown. Briefly restating his Peak Oil argument from *The Party's Over* (see 10/04), in *Powerdown* he proposes strategies to cope with the resource depletion, climate change, population pressures, declining food production, unsustainable debt levels and international instability about to overwhelm us.



Regarding this predicted energy famine, Heinberg believes that fossil fuels are non-renewable and their supplies finite, and that the signs are already here that the rate of global oil extraction has peaked and will start to subside within the next few years, regardless of any technical advances in exploration or recovery. Yet our demand for oil knows no bounds. This is obviously unsustainable, and Heinberg thinks that some form of collapse is now inevitable, though perhaps industrialised societies can do something to choose the form it takes.

He presents and analyses four options that demonstrate "the constraints and opportunities of our unique moment in time": Last One Standing, or the path of competition for remaining resources; Powerdown, the path of cooperation, conservation and sharing (including development of alternative energy sources and more equitable resource distribution); Waiting for a Magic Elixir, where wishful thinking, false hopes and denial distract from the hard work to avert a catastrophe; and Building Lifeboats, the path of community solidarity and preservation, which assumes that our civilisation cannot be salvaged in anything like its present form.

Heinberg rejects "business as usual" as the solution and suggests that a combined strategy of Powerdown and Building Lifeboats may preserve the best of what we have achieved while easing us out of a dire fate.

Heinberg concludes that small-scale, sustainable, decentralised communities that nurture individuals and preserve their culture while protecting the environment hold the answer for humanity to weather the coming challenges—but it means much sacrifice and effort on our part.

This is an alarm call for urgent action if we're to avoid decades of war, economic collapse and environmental catastrophe.

COCONUT CURES

by **Bruce Fife, ND**

Piccadilly Books, Colorado, USA, 2005

ISBN 0-941599-60-4 (256pp tpb)

Availability: Piccadilly Books Ltd,

<http://www.piccadillybooks.com>

If ever there were a true cure-all, coconut would have to be it. Its water, meat, milk and oil are prized in the Asia-Pacific region for its benefits in health, healing and longevity, and its fibre is useful in a range of applications. Literally, a coconut a day can keep the doctor away for peoples in the tropics and, for that matter, anywhere.

Coconut Cures is nutritionist and naturopathic doctor Bruce Fife's follow-up to his bestselling book *The Healing Miracles of Coconut Oil* (Piccadilly, 2001; see review in NEXUS 9/02). Fife has done much to educate the public about the healing properties of the medium-chain saturated fats found in coconut products, and his new book has an abundance of advice on how to make the most of this gift from nature.

People who partake of coconut are less prone to coronary artery disease, stroke, arthritis, asthma, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, auto-immune disease, psoriasis, cancer and many other illnesses compared with the general population.

As a food, coconut is nutritious, safe and can be taken freely; it promotes absorption of other foods, particularly fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E, K) and minerals (calcium, magnesium, iron). It also has powerful anti-pathogenic, anti-inflammatory and immunoregulating properties.

Fife advises on treatments for specific ailments using the products of the coconut; these are inexpensive, accessible and time-honoured alternatives that you can introduce into your regime without having to resort to pharmaceuticals. And forget about facelifts: applying coconut oil and partaking of coconut can reduce wrinkles and combat ageing! For those who can get hold of fresh coconut, Fife has some fabulous recipes for making your own coconut-based products.



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FORBIDDEN HISTORY

edited by J. Douglas Kenyon

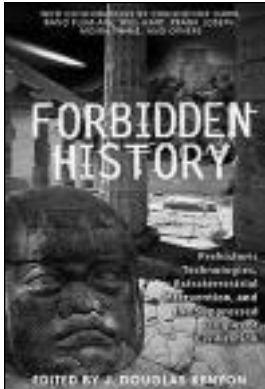
Bear & Co., USA, 2005

ISBN 1-59143-045-3 (322pp tpb)

Availability: **Australia**—Brumby Books, tel (03) 9761 5535; **USA**—Inner Traditions, <http://www.innertraditions.com>

The US-based bimonthly journal *Atlantis Rising* has been plugging away with alternative views on ancient history and mysteries for a decade or more. Now, its editor, J. Douglas Kenyon, has compiled a collection of essays from its pages that reflect a growing body of knowledge that questions the usual arguments and suspects, and applies some lateral thinking to our oldest conundrums on such questions as where we come from and where we are going.

The contributors are mavericks in their fields but are carrying on with expanding the envelope despite the occasional ridicule and extreme tactics from critics in academia. Several of them you'll have encountered before in the pages of NEXUS, whether in our feature or science pages or reviews.



As well as Kenyon himself, contributors include: Will Hart, on the futile search for missing links; Peter Bros, who exposes the scientific myth of the ice age; Robert Schoch, whose geological analyses confirm the Sphinx is much older than Egyptologists believe; Rand Flem-Ath, who wonders whether alignments of ancient monuments have something to do with the Earth's shifting crust; and Christopher Dunn, who speculates that the ancient Egyptians built the Great Pyramid as a power plant.

Touched on by various of these contributors are Velikovsky's catastrophe theories, Schwaller de Lubiez's secret wisdom insights, Michael Cremo's forbidden archaeology work, John Michell's research into the Atlantean dimensions of megalithic England, Paul LaViolette's and John Major Jenkins's heralding of a superwave from galactic centre, and Wal Thornhill and David Talbot on the electric universe (see David's items in Science News this issue).

This is a rollicking ride through history in the process of being rewritten (although, again, navigation would have been helped by the inclusion of an index).

COLLAPSE: How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive

by Jared Diamond

Allen Lane/Penguin, 2005

ISBN 0-7139-9862-8 (575pp tpb)

Availability: <http://www.penguin.com>

Many societies have failed in the past, but a handful have succeeded in prospering for millennia. So what can we learn from their experience and how can we apply it to societies today so that we don't repeat mistakes? In *Collapse*, his epic analysis of the changing fortunes of civilisations ancient and modern, Jared Diamond acknowledges that many cultures have disintegrated due to environmental crises—most of which have, at least in part, been self-induced.

Diamond identifies eight categories of processes through which past societies have brought on unintended ecological suicide: deforestation and habitat destruction, soil problems, water management problems, overhunting, overfishing, effects of introduced species on native species, human population growth and increased per-capita impact on people. He adds four more categories for today: human-caused climate change, environmental build-up of toxic chemicals, energy shortages and full human utilisation of the Earth's photosynthetic capacity. It's claimed that most of these 12 threats will become globally critical within the next few decades.

Diamond uses diverse examples from past and present societies, treating them with his hard-hitting, down-to-earth perspective to encourage us to connect with the rhythms of nature that produce times of abundance and then scarcity. The chapters cover a broad spectrum from the vanished Anasazi of the Four Corners of southwestern USA to our modern-day, drought-ridden Australia.

Ultimately, Diamond takes a positive note by stressing that our environmental, economic and social problems are not insurmountable but *can* be solved if we *choose* to start solving them. However, part of our choice must involve a realistic assessment of our modern consumer values and living standards, for we cannot continue treading roughshod over the environment if we want to survive into the future. He also takes a pot shot at corporations who put so much pressure on fragile environments, but points to more enlightened alternatives involving stewardship. Then again, there's not too much you can do about an asteroid impact on our planet. Sometimes, collapse just isn't your fault at all! A powerful, timely book.

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DVDs

Reviewed by Duncan Roads

THE CHARLIE HALL STORY: An Interview with Charles J. Hall by Paola Leopizzi Harris and David Coote
Produced by Paola Leopizzi Harris
© 2005 www.paolaharris.it (150mins)
Availability: Paola Harris, via her website
<http://www.paolaharris.it>

At the beginning of this millennium, Charles James Hall, a physicist and information technology specialist, took advantage of a period of unemployment to write his three-volume autobiography. Large portions of his writings are devoted to a record of his real-life experiences with ETs. He titled his book series *Millennial Hospitality* (see 12/02) and published it as fiction to protect the names of people he worked with. He states unequivocally that the events actually took place.

This historic video interview conducted in 2003–2004 is the first to put Charles Hall on the record and on the map. As a weatherman in the US Air Force, he was assigned to the desert ranges in the vicinity of the famous, super-secret "Dreamland" and Area 51. Hall not only claims to have witnessed interaction between "tall white" aliens and US military officials, but that he ended up playing a simple yet significant role in this joint terrestrial–ET project. It is a fascinating study of protocol and human–ET interaction on an exopolitical level.



CIRCLE SPEAK: A Journey into the Heart of Crop Circle Country

© 2005 New Land Films (217mins)
Produced by Laurence Newnam
Availability: New Land Films, PO Box 32660, Los Angeles, CA 90032, USA,
website <http://www.circlespeak.com>

This film comes with high praise from virtually all the leading luminaries from the crop circle research field (pardon the pun). I have to agree that it is the most comprehensive documentary on the subject that is "out there". In the process of covering the history of this phenomenon,

the producers introduce us to all the main characters—believers, sceptics, circle-makers and researchers alike. The film skilfully skirts all the personal politics, but still manages to capture the "big picture" of all that has transpired since the late 1980s.

It has excellent graphics and production quality, and heaps of interview clips with everyone involved. All angles of explanation are covered and great scientific detail appears where it is needed.

A must-have for all croppies!

STAIRWAYS TO HEAVEN:

The Practical Magic of Sacred Space

© 2004 Awaken Productions (54mins)
Produced and written by Freddy Silva
Availability: Freddy Silva, email
lovely272@earthlink.net, website
<http://www.lovely.clara.net>

Gothic cathedrals, 200-tonne rocks, standing circles, crop circles, sacred geometry and cymatics are all woven together in this excellent documentary.

Freddy is to be congratulated on such professionalism, considering he wrote, produced and directed this film. His choice of

musical scores is also great—and I had to keep reminding myself that I was *not* watching a UK TV documentary.

This is a very informative film which asks lots of questions and suggests some intriguing answers.

For example, I liked the thoughts at the end of the film, where it is suggested that the energy used to create crop formations could likely be affecting the deep

water aquifers under that part of the planet; and using the concept of water being able to retain memory, it is considered that the whole planet's water could be receiving information in the form of frequencies.

Stairways to Heaven also links in with Freddy's excellent book *Secrets in the Fields* (see 9/06), which explores the role of sound in the formation of these intriguing designs (see his article in this issue).

This film is truly a visual and mental feast that will leave you wanting more.



REVIEWS

MUSIC

Reviewed by Richard Giles

ECHU MINGUA

by Miguel "Angá" Díaz

World Circuit, UK, 2005 (59mins)
Distributors: **Aust**—MRA, tel (07) 3849 6020; **UK**—World Circuit, tel (0)1689 870 622, <http://www.worldcircuit.co.uk>

Percussionist Miguel "Angá" Díaz made his reputation with Irakere, a leading Cuban jazz ensemble, and started playing on Afro-Cuban All-Stars projects in the late 1990s. His solo debut is World Circuit label's most unusual Cuban fusion project to date. Band members on *Echu Mingua* include Cachaito on bass, flautist Magic Malik and DJ Dee Nasty. The CD has four fine pianists: Irakere's leader Chucho Valdés, Roberto Fonseca (of Ibrahim Ferrer fame), David Alfaro (Afro-Cuban All-Stars) and Rubén González. Malian Baba Sissoko is a guest on vocals and n'goni. A funky and unusual album of unique Cuban jazz.

SPIRIT OF HAVANA

by Kargo

New World Music, UK, 2005 (54mins)
Distributors: **Australia**—NWM, tel (02) 9565 4522; **UK**—NWM, tel 01986 891600; **Europe**—MCC, tel +49 4102 898202; **USA**—NWM, tel (303) 415 1040, <http://www.newworldmusic.com>

The sounds of Cuba have become very much a part of the world music scene since the Buena Vista Social Club hit the headlines in the late 1990s (see NEXUS 5/02). This album of Cuban music blends the Cubanismo rhythms with a touch of strings and piano and musical synth patterns that add an ethereal sound. Pleasant music with a good Cuban and sometimes Spanish feel, but it may not satisfy those fans of the true Buena Vista genre. There's much more of a Spanish influence that's enticing.

DAKSHINA

by Deva Premal

Prabhu Music, UK, 2005 (55mins)
Distributors: **Aust**—New World Music, tel (02) 9565 4522; **UK**—Prabhu Music, <http://www.prabhumusic.com>, <http://www.MitenDevaPremal.com>

The goddess of song must have smiled upon Deva Premal early in life as she is now one of the biggest minstrels of devotional sounds in the West. Her albums (see NEXUS 10/04) sell well throughout the Western world. The new album *Dakshina*, with her rendering of traditional mantras in a newer devotional style, with a richly layered production (with help from Miten and Kit

Walker), has blazed a trail of mantra across the globe. The album topped the new age charts at Amazon.com as soon as it was released. Its time has come.

DIVINE DEVOTION

by Sacred Earth

Sacred Earth Music, Aust, 2004 (56mins)
Distributors: **Australia**—New World Music; Sacred Earth Music, website <http://www.sacredearthliving.info>

In Australia, it's always encouraging to see local artists doing well. This album by Sacred Earth is another of devotional music with a difference. Sublime vocals by Pene (Prem Ayliah) provide a beautiful, heartfelt sound, and the elegant flute playing by Jethro combines to create a very warm, Earth-connecting musical experience. The embracing, liquid, angelic sounds of the female voice especially on tracks three and four, together with acoustic guitar backing, are a real feast. Their first album, *Pamanyungan* (2003), was awarded "Album of the Year" by the Queensland Recording Association. This second release is destined to be another success.

TANTRA OF SOUND HARMONIZER

by Jonathan Goldman & Andi Goldman

Spirit Music, USA, 2005 (56mins)
Distributors: **USA**—Spirit Music, tel 800 246 9764 (toll free in USA), website <http://www.healingsounds.com>

Over the years we've reviewed several albums to be used as tools to open up the chakras and improve brain balance and harmony. This one uses a system called SynchroSound that balances brainwaves and the body. It contains sacred sound, toning, chanting psycho-acoustic frequencies and sound texture to create a profound tool for healing and communication. Jonathan Goldman is known worldwide for his sound healing work and has released a book to go with the album. The CD itself comes with a 16-page booklet to explain its processes.

